



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
OREGON

July 15, 2022

J. Michael Cline,
Chair of the Board
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth St. N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Cline,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (Oregon BHA) stating our support and intent to collaborate with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on their "Neil Creek Fish and Wildlife Passage Design Project" (#76914) for which they are applying to the America The Beautiful Challenge grant for Planning, Collaboration and Engagement for States, Territories and Tribes.

Oregon BHA is a core member of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition and, in coordination with other member organizations, the Coalition has worked together for the past year supporting the planning and implementation of wildlife crossings on Interstate 5 between the city of Ashland, Oregon and the California border. Oregon BHA has contributed financially to the on-going feasibility study, and has participated in all SOWCC meetings and planning sessions. Oregon BHA intends to support ODOT in scoping and designing a new bridge at Neil Creek that spans enhanced fish passage and a new terrestrial pathway for large and small animals. Our organization will provide communications with our members and the broader public to gain support for the project and model for other wildlife crossing planning.

This grant is essential to increase on-the-ground fish and other wildlife habitat connectivity and enable passage across a freeway that has been long been a barrier in a nationally recognized area for biodiversity. Oregon BHA endorses this project as it will further our goals of restoring connectivity to the Cascade-Siskiyou bioregion, as well as adding value to the investment from Oregon BHA.

We ask for your full and fair consideration of the Oregon Department of Transportation's America the Beautiful Challenge grant entitled "Neil Creek Fish and Wildlife Passage Design Project" (#76914) and support the work of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition partners .

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Justin P Gindlesperger

Justin Gindlesperger, SW Regional Director

Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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